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THE ETHICAL LIFE AND CONCEPTIONS OF THE JAPANESE.

IN the mental activities of the Japanese people, ambition, sentiment, good sense, and artistic taste play an important rôle. The race of conquerors, who, coming over from the mainland of Asia and led by the first Emperor Jimmu-Jenno, subjugated the fierce aborigines, and in the name of Heaven took possession of the islands, forever left the stamp of their imperious temper upon their descendants. Japan must strike for a first place among the nations of the earth. Eminence and honor are dearer to her people than life itself; and how much more so than wealth or luxury! Utilitarian morality will never find wide-spread acceptance among this people. It will forever be sentiment which moves them. "A thousand hill-tops and ten thousand mountain summits," sings a poet, "are all covered with grass and shrubs. Where, in what peak of particular distinction shall I plant my staff? This long-cherished ideal of manhood—where shall I find its fit illustration? Where, but in the first summit of Mount Fuji?" A prince of the great house of Tokugawa, himself the lord of a large domain, once invited a famous actress to perform a series of dances for the entertainment of his invited guests. As she danced, the whole assembly was charmed with her skill and beauty, and the highest hilarity prevailed. Yet, at the close of the dance, the prince himself sat absorbed in thought, pensive and gloomy, and was noticed even to shed tears of grief. When he was asked by a trusty servant for the reason of this strange behavior, he answered, "This person is but a woman, and an actress, yet she has attained a position of national reputation, while I, a prince and a son of Iyeyasu, have not attained a first place among men." It is due to this spirit of ambition that there is to-day so much earnest purpose, steady application, well-balanced judgment underlying certain tendencies to foolish imitation and occasional outbursts of shallow excitement. This ambition takes little note of immediate

worldly consequences. It seeks nobility and greatness for their own sakes. It would be ashamed if it turned back from the pursuit of its aims because of risks. It is sentimental in the highest and best sense of the term.

To temper this spirit of ambition, Buddhism has contributed an element of pessimism and taught the people the wisdom of contentment and resignation. It has never ceased to remind them that this life, with all its interests and ambitions, is impermanent and vanity, and that only "in Buddha, the law and the order," is to be found the Nirvana, the true life—the life of permanence and calm.* The sounds of evening-bells slow measured and melancholy, coming from some distant elevation or hill-top, and reverberating through the whole town; the great halls of temples, clean-swept and empty of all furniture; the clean-dressed and clean-shaved monks calmly engaged in their daily devotions; the innumerable names and stories of men and women, some of them of highest stations in life, who forsook the world and obtained rest for their tired spirits,—all reminded the people of life, beauty, and peace which are not of this world. The idea gradually prevailed that in youth and the prime of life the spirit of noble ambition should rule, while in old age the spirit of resignation and contentment. This latter idea of resignation to fate, or of contentment with one's lot, was no doubt sometimes practised too readily. Men and women became too easily discouraged and too soon tired of life. The life of retirement became at times

* Buddhism was introduced into Japan in 552 A.D., in the thirteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Kimmei. The powerful Soga family espoused its cause at the court, and the Prince Shotoku Taishi became its strong patron as well as its illustrious expounder. Early in the ninth century the powerful Tendai and Shingon sects were introduced; in the latter part of the eleventh century the Zen sect, which soon gained great popularity among the soldierly class on account of its pathological method of self-mastery; and in the latter part of the twelfth century Shinran and Nichirin began their great careers in the founding of the popular, and only strictly Japanese, sects of Buddhism,—the Monto-Shin Shū,—which allows the marriage of its clergy, and the Hokké Shū, noted for the methodistic fervor of its piety and the zealous propagation of its doctrines. With this came to an end the palmy days of Buddhism. Since then any creative work by the Buddhists was rarely ever done, either in the line of speculation or of founding new sects.

a thing of fashion, so that men felt, or pretended to feel, old prematurely, and young men too often had thrown upon them the duties of life for which they were little prepared.* Yet, on the whole, Buddhism rendered a good service in counter-acting and ennobling the spirit of fierce strife and of worldly ambition. It helped to create in the souls of men and women a longing for the life of the spirit, however inadequate its philosophy of salvation may have been. I said above that Buddhism has tempered our philosophy of life; but it has not enslaved it, or we might have been to-day "like Sodom and Gomorrah." Buddhism, which has made, according to H. Dharmapala, "Asia mild," was a blessing in our own case, because it did not succeed in making us *too* mild. It is highly creditable to the mental virility of the people that they were able finally to assert themselves against the Buddhistic domination and declare their mental independence. It shows their good sense that they knew when and where to stop following the teachings of the Hindoo sage. Thus resulted a happy fusion of activity and calmness, of ambition and resignation, of desire and contentment, which is so well typified by our national flower—the cherry-blossom. "Among men the Samurai, among flowers the cherry." When its season comes, behold! all hill-sides and valleys, all the gardens of cities are at once covered with its blossoms. Yet in a few days the white petals begin to fall, and, being blown by gentle breezes, sometimes present a veritable snow-scene; thus they go in supreme unconsciousness, without leaving behind any trace of a greedy hold on life. The flower is loved for what it typifies as well as for its own beauty.†

This life-ideal has, however, enriched itself most largely by

* It was not unusual a generation ago in Japan to find persons regarding themselves old at forty-five or fifty, and retiring from the active duties of life, throwing over the cares of their households to their sons, and devoting themselves to writing poetry, to horticulture, to tea-drinking, or the games of *gō* and chess.

† The life of Prince Hosokawa Fujitaka, otherwise called Yūsai, a poet, a philosopher, a warrior, a courtier, and a statesman, all in one, is a typical example of this phase of Japanese life. He lived in a period of transition (1532 A.D.—1600 A.D.) leading from Ashikaga to Tokugawa Shōgunnate. I am sorry there is no space here to give some account of his exceedingly interesting life.

accepting the ethical system of Confucius. The sacred books of Confucianism, which are almost exclusively ethical, social, or political, and above all practical, in the nature of their teachings, were greatly serviceable in lines where both Buddhism and Shintoism lamentably failed. To Confucianism Japan owes that richness of ethical content in her life and thought for which she will be forever grateful. To be sure, the influence of Confucianism, after its brilliant success in establishing itself,* during the seventh and eighth centuries of the Christian era, in the court and the departments of state, suddenly declined and gave its place to Buddhism; yet, with the inauguration of the last era of peace, under the shōgunnate of the Tokugawa family,† it not only regained its influence, but became predominant. If for the seven centuries previous to this it had to content itself as a parasite of Buddhism, depending for its preservation upon the kindness of the priests, it was not long after the new era before great minds arose to uphold Confucianism‡ and assert its independence against

* Confucianism was introduced into Japan, according to tradition, in 284 A.D. in the sixteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Ōjin. But it seems to have made little headway till the coming of Buddhism in 552 A.D. The latter seems to have gained strong adherents from the very first, because probably of its promises to confer temporal and spiritual blessings. The study of the sacred books of Buddhism, which were all in the Chinese translation, gave stimulus to the study of the Chinese language, and most naturally led to a study of the Chinese classics; and, besides, the very antagonism which the rapid spread of Buddhism called forth led to the study of the classics on the part of those who wished for something to appeal to against the Hindoo religion. During the seventh century we find troops of eager young men going out to China, braving the winds and waves of the Yellow Sea, in order to learn the literature, arts, laws, and institutions of the great Tan period of Chinese history. It was through the efforts of these young men that the first systematic form of administration was established and the first Japanese code was framed and promulgated.

† The era of peace extended from the installation of Tokugawa Iyeyasu into the office of the Shōgunnate (or the generalissimo of the empire), in 1603 A.D., to the restoration of the Mikado to his rightful authority, in 1868 A.D. It was during this period (usually called the Tokugawa period) that the institutions of feudalism were developed to perfection; that the arts and literature made their final great stride, and the distinctive civilization of Japan was consummated.

‡ The great names—Yamasaki Ansai, Nakaye Toju, Kumazawa Banzan, Ito Zinsai, Kaibara Yekiken, Ogiu Sorai, Muro Kiuso, Oshiwo Heihachiro, Sato

the domination of Hindoo speculation. At the close of this epoch men were found in every village and hamlet who read "the four books and five classics," and who, like the Jewish rabbis of old, gathered disciples around them and expounded to them the moral teachings of the great sage. These teachings, which were formulated into the doctrine of the five relationships, could very easily be mastered by the people. They were: 1. Between father and son let there be love. 2. Between king and subject let there be duty. 3. Between husband and wife let there be proper distinctions (of functions). 4. Between the old and the young let there be orderliness. 5. Between friend and friend let there be faithfulness.

The great merit of Confucianism was in the positive and ethical nature of its teachings. It dwelt on the importance of the daily routine of life, and invested with almost religious significance the minor, commonplace events of existence. As an offset against the pessimism and the speculative vagaries of Buddhism and the unmoral, or too often immoral, superstitions of the popular beliefs, the influence of this practical system of positive morality can hardly be overestimated. If we must characterize the influence of Buddhism as negative, as we have already seen it to be, that of Confucianism was decidedly positive and vitalizing.*

There was yet another feature in the teachings of Confucius which has had a very important and far-reaching influence in Japan; it is the teaching respecting *keun-tsz*, or a man of

Itssai, Fujita Toko—which have adorned this period would confer glory to a similar epoch in any country. This was verily the era of renaissance for Japan.

* Confucius persistently refused to speculate on the high and mystic regions of the unseen, and confined his observations and discussions to matters of daily life. He was born in a troublous time, and his merits as a sage and statesman were little appreciated; yet, unlike many men of the time, he refused to forsake the world. His courage and heroism in the cause of righteousness are something truly wonderful. If he was not a philosopher like Plato, or a prophet like Isaiah, it was no mark of inferiority that he was "a transmitter, and not an originator," because the positive morality he exemplified and the honest, heroic grandeur of his character have proved to be the strongest bulwark against the enervating influence of the sentimental and speculative pessimism of India, both in China and Japan, for all these years.

complete culture. It formed the ideal of the Sage himself and of all his disciples. It meant a man who, through learning, culture, and self-mastery, attained a state of harmonious and complete development of all his faculties; who was therefore worthy to be intrusted with the affairs of the state, or to be made a teacher and guide of the people. The Confucian idea of social and political reform was to create a class of cultured men—men of “sweetness and light,” as Matthew Arnold would say—whose mission it was to uphold before kings and princes the ideal of a righteous state, to undertake the duties of government whenever called upon, and to teach and guide the people to walk in accordance with the doctrine of the five relationships. This was indeed a grand and inspiring ideal, and it has helped to produce in Japan those enlightened princes and scholarly statesmen to whom the country owes many a salvation in times of crises, and to whose examples we owe that ideal of enlightened and upright public service which is to-day yet proving so influential. Thus was added to our philosophy of life another element which enriched what was already so beautiful and made it strongly ethical.

In the practical application of Confucian ethics the Japanese have differed very significantly from the Chinese. Among the latter it was the principle of filial piety rather than that of loyalty to the king which has been the basis of all their morality. In the *Analects of Confucius* it is said: “A man of true culture (*keun-tsz*) endeavors to lay the foundations. When the foundations are laid, then is the path of truth secure. Filial piety and brotherly goodness—are not these indeed the foundations for the establishment of righteousness?” Confucius taught more fully and more explicitly on the subject of filial piety than on that of loyalty. The reason for this is not difficult to see. Confucius and his disciples lived in a time of almost total anarchy, and they went from one prince to another, tendering their services, but meeting with little honest response, so that there never grew up between them and any of the princes a deep sentiment of attachment. Confucius once playfully compared himself to a jeweller with a precious stone to sell, and said, “I would sell it, I would sell it; I am only wait-

ing for a proper price." Besides, from earliest times the Chinese have lived under constant changes of dynasties and governments. and, notwithstanding all their remarkable conservatism, they were forced to embrace a theory of society which justified rebellion. As the modern Chinese social system, notwithstanding its unmitigated form of absolutism in central government, contradicts itself by having within its local administrations many elements of democratic self-government, in the same way from time immemorial the Chinese held to the doctrine of the divine right of kings, yet held at the same time that rebellion was justifiable whenever the reigning dynasty lost the favor of Heaven. The case of the saintly King Woo,* who, though subject to the reigning imperial house, yet rose against it and in the name of Heaven destroyed it, compelled the scholars of succeeding periods to give up the extreme theory of legitimacy forever. It is evident, therefore, that in such a society as the Chinese the only bond of unity and continuity (there being no religious bond as in the case of the Jews) was the bond of family relationship; and we find that Confucianism as a national system of Ethics laid the

* The Chow dynasty, of which King Woo was the founder, lasted 1123-255 B.C. "The traditions now become decidedly more trustworthy, although still largely mixed with fable. Woo-wang [or King Woo] was brave and upright. Under him a momentous change in government took place. By him the kingdom was divided into seventy-two feudal States."—(Fisher.) The principles of government, the rites and ceremonies of State and of festivals, as well as the entire social order and ideas of this Chow dynasty, were forever idealized and crystallized through the writings of Confucius, who lived at the close of this long period, and in midst of social dismemberment and anarchy. In Shu-King, or the book of history, Confucius devotes a large space to the story of King Woo.

† The theory of kingship in China was very much like the idea underlying the kingship among the ancient Jews. The difference between the two was in the fact that in one case we have *keun-tszi* or cultured men, as the transmitters and scribes of the wisdom of the ancients; in the other case prophets as the seers of approaching events and the proclaimers of the will of God. Confucius, indeed, looked to Providence to guide him to some prince who was appointed to reign and restore peace, but he never heard the voice of God telling him to arise, find a king, and set him up. In the meantime the only thing which a *keun-tszi* like Confucius could do was to prepare and make himself ready, through culture, for any call of service, and wait patiently for such an opportunity.

greatest importance on filial piety. Thus, the teachings of Confucius and the social conditions of China both led that people to regard the principle of filial piety as the first and the last. Indeed, we cannot but admire the remarkable longevity of a community of three hundred millions of people, who have preserved intact their traditions and customs, as well as their immense territory, for three thousand years and through twenty-four changes of dynasty. It seems as if here we see the confirmation of the truth of the fourth commandment in the Mosaic decalogue, which promises longevity as a reward of filial piety.

The case was different with the Japanese. They indeed held in theory that filial piety was the foundation of all virtue. Yet in practice they laid the greatest emphasis on the principle of loyalty. The claims of the King or the State took precedence of all other claims, and the almost religious devotion to the cause of the Mikado or of the State was the mainspring of all virtues. Probably one of the most remarkable things in the history of the world is the unique place the Imperial House of Japan has occupied in the estimation of the people. Think for a moment of one royal family ruling over an energetic and progressive people from the very beginning of their history, for some twenty centuries! It is true, indeed, that during the large part of this long period the chief executive duties rested upon the heads of different powerful clans, and in some cases the emperors were compelled to abdicate or sent into exile. Yet never was the throne occupied by any but the members of the imperial family. To the Mikado always belonged the right to confer ranks and to make appointments, and if in practice he was not always free to act as he chose, in theory at least his authority was never disputed. The principle of loyalty, however, as almost the sole foundation of all virtues, found its wider application after the establishment of feudalism,—from the thirteenth century onward.* For feudal-

* The founder of feudalism was Minamoto-no-Yoritomo, who, after his victory over the rival clan Taira, assumed in 1192 A.D., by appointment of the Mikado, the office of Sei-i-Jai-Shōgun, and established the government of the empire at Kamakura, not far from the present capital, Tokyo. He took away

ism created so many grades of masters as the nearer and more tangible objects of loyal service that it soon made this principle the all-pervading bond of social life. The Mikado had his immediate court officials and his vicegerent, the Shōgun; these had their own immediate retainers, these latter again in turn their own trusty servants, and so on. In a large number of cases the bond of attachment between a master and his servant was the heritage of many generations, and was even closer than blood-relationship. "A faithful wife never seeks a second husband, a loyal servant never serves a second master." A true retainer to a daimio (lord of a domain) never offered himself to the service of another suzerain, even in case he was expelled through no fault of his from his master's household, or where his master's house, through some calamity, came to extinction and he was left a "homeless wanderer." * But as the people advanced in intelligence and civilization, and the idea of nationality gradually dawned in the minds of the leading men, the Mikado and his cause came increasingly to be the watchword for national unity; and when feudalism was finally overthrown as the result of the restoration of 1868, the Mikado became the one and sole object of popular devotion. He represents to-day to each one of his forty-one millions of subjects the unity, interests, and glory of the whole. For this evolution from petty, divided, and often conflicting claims of loyalty into the enlightened and united loyalty of to-day, and, in fact, for the deep-rooted affection of the people towards the imperial house, Japan owes a debt of gratitude to Shintoism, which was in its earliest beginning probably either Shamanism or the simple worship of the heavens, and which very early developed into Mikadoism, or the worship of the Mikado. We owe this service especially to the later remarkable Shintoist revival, extending from the

from the Mikado and his court in Kiyoto all real power and authority. Kamakura is now a deserted village and a summer resort.

* A servant became often so attached to a family that he remained all his life in the service of that family, sometimes serving three or four generations of masters. Such a servant was at times led to undergo martyrdom for the cause of his master's household in cases of emergency.

middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, the influence of which was permanent and far-reaching, finally leading to the realization of our national unity under the restored imperial authority.*

Thus stands the contrast: the Chinese emphasizing the duty of filial obedience, the Japanese that of loyal devotion. The one finding their popular ideal of virtue in the twenty-four patterns of filial piety, which can best be described as caricatures of the great virtue, the other in the story of the forty-seven *ronins* † who avenged the death of their prince in the face of the greatest difficulties, each of whom, in order to accomplish his object, "hated his father, mother, wife, and children," and when it was accomplished committed *harakiri* in calm satisfaction. We see yet more the difference between these two peoples in the fact that among the modern Chinese, while patriotism and official probity seem to be singularly wanting, there exist in striking contrast to this some virtues of a private and personal nature. Thrift, perseverance, honesty in business, seem to follow from their devotion to the interests of their household, and the trustworthiness of the Chinese merchants has already become almost proverbial in the Far East. The criminality of the universal official swindling seems to lose something of its great heinousness when we remember that these same swindlers have the good of their aged parents or of their wives and children at heart.‡

* This Shintoist revival was led on its religious and literary sides by three remarkable men,—Kamo Mabuchi (1696 A.D.—1769 A.D.), Moto-ori Nobunaga (1730 A.D.—1801 A.D.), and Hirata Atsu Tane (1776 A.D.—1843 A.D.). They were each exceedingly individualistic, but had one common aim, which was to uphold the national dignity of Japan through the revival of native literature as against the supremacy of Chinese learning, and the worship of the gods as against the domination of Buddhism. This movement had, moreover, its political counterpart in the Shintoistic Confucianism of Yamasaki Ansaï (1615–1682 A.D.), and his disciple Asami (1712 A.D.—1771 A.D.), in the History of Japan by Rai-Sanyo (1780 A.D.—1832 A.D.), and in the rise of the Mito-School of learning, whose leading spirit was Fujita Toko (1804 A.D.—1855 A.D.). It was altogether a great movement, and did more than anything else to prepare the way for our national unification through the restoration of the imperial authority.

† Read Saito and Greey's "The Royal Ronins."

‡ When, after the close of the recent war, the Japanese took possession of the island of Formosa, there was presented the humorous and significant spectacle

A great deal of scepticism formerly and of surprise latterly has been expressed at the real success of reforms in Japan. New Japan is, however, a solid reality now, and is fast becoming an important factor in the affairs of the world. To what do we owe all this success? Is it due to some peculiar native endowment of the people? Is it due to the climate, situation, and surroundings of the country? I answer, that the achievement of the Japanese in the reorganization of their social and political institutions is due chiefly to their peculiar ethical life. In the first place, we must take into consideration the deep-rooted feeling of loyalty to the Mikado which animates the hearts of his subjects. When the restoration took place, his will forthwith became the law of the country. He was not only absolute in power, but almost worshipped as a divine personage. The most enlightened public opinion of the time stood before the people incarnated in the person of the Mikado, and all forms of conservative opposition were one by one swept away before his successive edicts. In the second place, we must take note of the existence of "the authority of right reason" which the cultured class, whose ideal was *keun-tsz*, represented in all matters relating to the welfare of the country. The mass of the people were indeed still slaves of ignorance and superstition, but they possessed one good quality, that of knowing whom to follow. They were humble because of the consciousness of their own ignorance, and gladly took the better-informed men, in a large number of cases their juniors in age, as leaders and guides. The stiff-necked, blindfolded "Philistines" have had no existence in modern Japan. Probably no other people in modern times have proved such humble learners. Yet their humility was not unaccompanied by some solid mental qualities, other-

of rich, well-fed, and well-dressed Chinese inhabitants, who had not contributed a cent towards the prosecution of the war which led to their subjugation, looking down with contemptuous smile upon the frugal fare and cheap dress of the conquerors, whose countrymen at home voluntarily contributed, aside from regular taxes, over ten millions of yen towards the maintenance of the war, the number of the individual contributors amounting to one-fourth of the total population.

wise they might have been humble learners yet unable to accomplish so much. We must, therefore, take into consideration, in the third place, the intense spirit of patriotic ambition which has characterized everybody, from the emperor down to his meanest subjects,—the enlightened and the ignorant, the high and the low, all classes of people alike,—and which led them to undergo every hardship, give up every prejudice, sacrifice every personal interest in order that they might contribute, each in his own way, towards the reformation of the country. Why did the last of the Shōguns, with the large fighting resource yet behind him, submit so meekly to what he at first regarded with justice as not the true will of the Mikado, but the dictation of certain powerful clans? Why was the Civil War which accompanied the restoration so easily brought to a close and harmony so soon restored? Why did the Imperial Court itself, in all countries the bulwark of tradition and conservatism, lead the people in our own case, by introducing modern ideas into its rules of etiquette, the emperor himself readily condescending to appear before his subjects, dressed, moreover, in European costume, a man among men? What was the one last argument which decided the initiation of those innumerable radical reform-measures which were so much needed, yet were so diametrically opposed to the popular prejudices of the times? That one argument was, "This is necessary." Necessary for what? Necessary, in order to make the country civilized and strong. Imagine, for a moment, the depths of pain and humiliation into which this proud and ambitious people were thrown when they were compelled to realize the utter powerlessness and destined collapse of Asiatic nations before the superior civilization and strength of those "red-haired, blue-eyed Western barbarians." The clearer they saw the situation the stronger became their determination to rise with one supreme effort out of this hell of shame. Nothing is impossible to those who are determined, "since nothing is impossible to him who believeth." Is it any wonder, then, that this people have astonished the whole world in these latter days of the nineteenth century with what

they have already accomplished, and yet more with the possibility of what they will yet accomplish ?

The position of woman forms a very interesting as well as a very important topic in connection with the present discussion. It is not unusual to hear some writers discuss this subject in a way which seems to be entirely misleading. I am free to admit, in the first place, that the theory of womanhood as it was popularly expounded by our moralists would make it appear that the Japanese women have suffered from the same kind of religious and social despotism as the women of India or China. The Hindoo theory of threefold obedience—"when young, obey your parents; when married, obey your husband; when widowed, obey your son"—and the Chinese theory of seven reasons for divorce* were indeed popularly taught and accepted. Yet it must be remembered that here again the native good sense of the people never permitted these theories to be strictly applied in practice. The original native ideas of womanhood were extremely healthy, and there never existed any theory of woman's inferiority to man until the alien systems of religion began to prevail. We have had several empresses to govern us, among them Jingo-Kogu, the conqueror of Corea; numbers of female poets and authors† whose works are among the acknowledged classics to-day; mothers and wives without number whose chastity, wisdom, and nobility of character will bear comparison with the world's best types of womanhood. The marriage of widows was looked upon with favor, especially if they were young. The wife, if she was in subjection to her husband, was yet at the same time the mistress of the household and the revered mother of her children. Polygamy, though it was practised more or less among the highest classes, was never practised

* The seven reasons for divorce are: 1. Disobedience to the husband's parents. 2. Childlessness. 3. Licentiousness. 4. Over-jealousness. 5. Leprosy, and other kindred diseases. 6. Over-talkativeness. 7. Committing of theft.

† The names of Ono-no-Komachi (who flourished in the ninth century), a poetess, and Murasaki Shikibu (who flourished in the tenth century), the authoress of "*Genjimonogatari*" (translated into English by Suematz Kencho. London, Trübner & Co., 1882), stand pre-eminent.

among the large body of the people, including the larger number of the Samurai class. Women freely walked out on the street, those of better classes always with escorts, and their lives at home were pleasant, contented, and happy. Young ladies of the Samurai class not seldom practised the use of a halberd, which made them healthy, strong, and courageous.

It is not my intention to defend the Chinese theory of the seven reasons for divorce or the Hindoo theory of threefold obedience; yet, in justice to them, I must say that the fundamental principle lying at the bottom of these theories was not, in my judgment, the intrinsic inferiority of women (as the popular and later expositions certainly make it appear), so much as the superior claims of the family or household above all individual rights. The family, under the patriarchal system, was a unit which no individual member of it had a right to break up. If a wife, therefore, proved herself, by her character, act, or physical condition, to be hostile to the true interests of the household, it was her duty, "having come from another family into this," to leave it; in fact, neither her husband nor anybody else could keep her, if they meant to be dutiful to their ancestors. Just so with regard to woman's duty of obedience. The wife obeys her husband because he is the head of the household; the mother obeys her son because he is the head of the household. The father did the same if he had resigned his place as the head of the household and was living a life of retirement. These things sound, I have no doubt, very harsh to those who live in a community where modern ideas reign; yet the Japanese old-time ideas of womanhood, and their practical consequences, should be judged, not from the modern Western stand-point, but rather from their own stand-point; for it makes a world-wide difference whether a son succeeds to his father's estate as his right or as his duty. In our case it was his duty to so look after the affairs of the household that his mother, brothers, and sisters were as well provided for as in the days of his father. It not infrequently happened that a young man was obliged to divorce his wife, whom he really loved, because the peace of the household demanded it. I am not defending the system

of ideas which leads men and women to act in so many unnatural ways. What I wish to point out is the fact that, under all these mistaken notions, there was pervading throughout the sense of duty, devotion, and self-sacrifice; and also this, that the practical working of our theory was not near so bad as is sometimes imagined.

No discussion of Japanese morals can be complete without mention of a very popular phrase which represents—conjointly with the principle of loyalty—the ethical life of the people. I refer to the phrase *giri-ninjo*, or reason and humanity. It expresses the antithesis which so often exists in life between one's natural feelings of love, on one hand, and the call of duty on the other, when one is expected from the stand-point of ethics to pursue the path of duty, even though at the sacrifice of his natural instincts of humanity.* There is nothing remarkable in this idea, nothing peculiar to the Japanese, except that they have carried out its application in some cases to singular and fantastic extremes, so much so that their highly self-sacrificing and moral acts not seldom seem immoral looked at from the modern stand-point. We read in popular novels and romances, in dramas and stories, of persons being "compelled through the sense of *giri* or reasonable duty" to commit certain acts which were entirely opposed to their natural instincts. A wife has two children to care for; the one is her own, the other the child of her husband's former wife. The latter is, therefore, a child of *giri*, and she is twice as good to that child as to her own. A nurse to a child-prince realizes the imminent danger to which he is placed through the wicked designs of his enemies. She has her own child at the court as the playmate of the prince. The time comes when she can only save the life of the prince by sacrificing her own child as his substitute. Two young women are in love with one young man, each not knowing the other is in love with him. By and by one of them learns that the

* The popular romances and novels by such authors as Bakin, Tamenago, and the dramas of Chikamatsu, are all full of this idea. See Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," which gives some very interesting stories illustrating this principle.

other is his destined wife because of an engagement entered into by the young man when he was adopted into the family of this girl. Obeying the dictate of "reason" she gives up the cherished object of her affection and blesses his union with her rival. Many a woman thought that she was performing her "reasonable duty" when she sold her purity and freedom, as the only thing she could do, "being but a woman," to help her poor invalid parents or her beloved unfortunate husband. If the term *chugi* (or loyalty) was aristocratic in its origin and gradually permeated into the lower strata of society, the term *giri-ninjio* was plebeian in its origin, and was found most largely in use among the masses of the people, though it extended upward through the influence of romances and dramas into the female circles of the higher classes. The term used by the aristocratic class, which corresponded almost completely to *giri-ninjio*, was *setsu-gi*, or the reasonable principle of action. The *setsu-gi* has commanded many a *harakiri* in the course of Japanese history.*

History presents few parallels to the wonderful, revolutionary effect which the coming in of modern thought produced in

* Here in this connection the two other phases in which this *giri* feeling manifested itself need to be noted. I mean (1) the right of revenge, or *kataki-uchi*, the killing of one's mortal enemy. The saying, "with the murderer of one's king or father one does not live under the same heavens," reigned supreme in the ethical thought of the Japanese. The romantic story of the forty-seven ronins mentioned before is a notable example of this. Another very famous story, over seven hundred years old, is that of the revenge by the Soga brothers of the murder of their father. Sometimes a wife revenges the murder of her husband; sometimes a brother that of his brother. If the son who starts on the search for his father's murderer is young, some one who hears of it, perhaps a perfect stranger, is so moved by it that he volunteers to accompany him and aid him in the noble endeavor. This idea of the right of private revenge has died out with the establishment of the new *régime* and the prevalence of modern ideas. (2) *Otokodate*, or, literally, "to establish one's manhood," was a friendly association of brave men, with one at the head of the guild, whose word was law. Its principle was to help the needy and the oppressed, to resist the oppressions of the strong. It flourished mostly in large cities, among classes below the Samurai, and it was in many cases the back-bone of plebeian morality. The utmost stress was laid on the sacredness of a promised word, and on the duty of fulfilling the trust of another. The working of this principle produced some unique and heroic figures.

Japan. The utter collapse of the feudal institutions, the sudden overthrow of the old religious systems, the introduction of the ideas of political right, of civil liberty, the inauguration of the constitutional and representative forms of government, above all, the phenomenal rise to influence of the industrial class—all these have necessarily wrought havoc with those ideals and conceptions of morals which once reigned supreme. In practice, indeed, the principle of loyalty and patriotism, of *giri* and *setsu-gi*, are yet to-day held to with deep earnestness and dogged tenacity. In fact, it is not without reason to think that both the Restoration, by bringing forward the one supreme object of devotion in the person of the Mikado, and the opening of the country to the intercourse of foreign nations, by acquainting the people with the national dangers from without, helped greatly to enlighten and deepen the feelings of loyalty and patriotism. Yet as an ethical theory and system the old conceptions have entirely lost their logical ground and may be said with truth to have completely broken down. Besides, in the light of the new situations and conditions, some grave criticisms can well be brought against them; and if the Japanese are to have a new and dominant ideal of ethical life, it will probably be the product of the same independent and peculiar working of the Japanese mind, in which will be found at the same time the best elements of the old system, and the essential elements of Western civilization, existing side by side, fused into one harmonious whole. It is interesting to note that the process of ethical reconstruction has already begun, and is, I believe, bound to succeed. New Japan is to-day confronted, among other great and pressing problems, by the problem of a new ethics, upon whose right solution rests ultimately her destiny as a new civilized power in the Far East.

The reader might, perhaps, inquire how far Christianity has contributed, or will contribute, towards the solution of the ethical problem in Japan. Does it, or does it not, bring some elements of ethical truths which were not found in our old system? The question is somewhat ambiguous. Christianity may mean in the mind of the inquirer either the religion which

has already contributed so much to enrich the ethical ideas of the peoples of Europe and America, or the Christian Church in Japan, including the native pastors and foreign missionaries. If we understand the question in the former sense, Christianity *has* certainly contributed a very important and essential element to Japanese ethical thought. I refer to the idea of individuality or personal liberty. This idea is now at the foundation of our political, legislative, and social order, and it is something our people never knew before, at least never knew in the breadth and depth of its meaning. We did not learn it, indeed, from reading the Bible or directly from Christianity; we learned it through the law, literature, and institutions of the West. Yet, since the development of this idea in Europe is due in no small degree to the influence of Christianity, we might say with truth that this is one important contribution Christianity has already made to Japan. If, however, we take the question in the second sense, what shall be our answer? It seems to be one of the many burning questions of the day, whether or not the Christian missions have done any good.* One party claims that the movement is an utter failure, the other that it has had a very important share in the progress and enlightenment achieved by the countries of the East. Our question does not concern the religious side of the missionary

* Protestant Christianity was first introduced into Japan in the year 1859. During the first ten years the prospect was exceedingly dark, but with the Restoration of 1868, and the full opening of the country to Western civilization, the outlook greatly improved. From 1880 to 1890 it made the most wonderful progress, which brought the Protestant population from five thousand in 1880 up to thirty thousand in 1890. Its influence on the nation at large is disproportionately strong compared with its numerical strength. The Greek Church (the Russian) has been very industrious, and at one time was very successful in obtaining converts. It has a membership of twenty thousand. Its actual strength is not at all comparable to the Protestants. The Roman Catholic Church, after its great success in the sixteenth century, at the time of Francis Xavier, and its subsequent entire extermination (about eighty years after the beginning of the mission), began its mission again after the recent opening of the country. It has a body of very devoted and zealous missionaries, and its membership is forty-five thousand. Its adherents are, however, almost exclusively from the lowest and the most ignorant classes, and as yet it has not shown any traceable influence on the community at large.

movement at all, but only so far as the movement may or may not have contributed to the enrichment of moral life and ideas of the Japanese people. I think it is not difficult to point out several features in the movement which have been disappointing, especially from the ethical point of view, to many thoughtful men who expected much from Christianity. This refers, however, to the negative side, to what was missing, to what might have existed in order to be more complete. But, taking the body of foreign missionaries as a whole and the native churches as they are, there is one particular in which they have succeeded in impressing on the mind of the Japanese people a very important ethical truth. I refer to the principle of monogamy and personal purity. I do not mean to say that the Japanese people have been, as a rule, polygamous, or that womanhood among them, especially in the better classes, had not a very high ideal of faithfulness and chastity. But monogamy as the only true principle of social order, and purity as obligatory upon men as upon women, were never clearly understood. If to-day our best ethical opinion has practically endorsed these truths, we must give a large measure of credit to the foreign missionaries who have been living among us for nearly forty years. To be sure, we have had among us other representatives from Europe and America; but, unfortunately, with some marked exceptions, they have, as a rule, too readily conformed to the loose ideas current around them, and, instead of being helpers towards progress, have become corrupters of our morality. But the missionaries have lived good, honest lives, and been careful not to give occasion for scandal; the native Christians, as a rule, have in their lives been consistent to their profession. All this has been an object-lesson to the people around them. Besides, during this epoch of revolutionary changes, when the old structures of society were crumbling on all sides, when many young men openly proclaimed that to free themselves from all restraints of morality was a mark of enlightenment, and when, moreover, the idea prevailed that there existed no morality in Europe and America, and that those countries were powerful only because they had superior military equipments, during this time of transi-

tion, I say, it was a very great and noteworthy thing that there should be these men and women from the Far West to represent to us the ethical and spiritual side of their civilization. By their very presence they reminded us of the importance of morality and religion in the life of a nation. In this respect their silent, unconscious influence was beyond all estimation. I have no doubt that with the further progress of Christianity in Japan, and the consequent more perfect adaptation of its teachings to the need of the people, it is destined to exercise a yet more thoroughgoing influence in the development of our ethical thought.

Before concluding, I will make a few criticisms on the old ethical ideas by considering them in the light and situation of to-day, and try to indicate the lines along which the new ethical idea will probably develop.

It seems to me a just criticism against the old system of ethics that it was too one-sided in its enforcement of duties. While the teachings about the five relationships seem, when theoretically considered, to be well balanced, yet in their practical application they often proved to be too partial and unequal in the distribution of duties. The duties of father, king, husband, or elder brother were unfairly light compared with the duties of subject, son, wife, or younger brother. It could not, perhaps, be otherwise; for the practice of morals could not but correspond with the social conditions of the time. And just for the same reason that the Confucian system of graduated morality was so well suited to the feudal forms of society, the new time and the industrial revolution, as well as the prevalence of the ideas of political right and personal liberty, will demand a new presentation of the old truth set in a system of philosophy which will correspond to the new social environment. Such a philosophy must start, in the first place, with an ethical conception of the rights of man, must give, so to speak, an ethical valuation of the individual. Modern Japan has been acting under higher impulses, in freeing the outcast *êta* class from social and political opprobrium, in freeing the serfs from the burden of innumerable feudal exactions, in giving political rights and social privileges to all

classes of people. But there has not yet been formulated a self-consistent ethical theory of man. Why is a subject to be treated with respect and granted his due right by the Mikado? Why are children to be treated with respect and reverence by their parents? Why are the commonplace, every-day virtues of chastity, honesty, thrift of such great importance? Is it not because we are human beings before we are fathers, sons, kings, or subjects? It is the idea of man as an ethical personality equal before Heaven, entitled to all the privileges of existence, to equal opportunities in the pursuit of the aims of life, which should be at the foundation of every true and enlightened social order. This ethical conception of man teaches us that not only are we to work for the best welfare of the community, but that every one is to work for the noblest development of his own personality. His life is not his own, but belongs to an ideal. His body, too, is an ethical property; he must keep it pure. No public service, or an act of loyal devotion, is perfect if it is performed at the expense of private virtues. He only is a free man who keeps his mind and body pure, and who looks alike upon all, high and low, great and small, with sincere reverence, because of the ideal that is in each and every human being.

In the second place, in the course of this reconstruction we need an ethical conception of human society. Why should we work for the good and glory of our own country? Why should we live and die for the good and glory of our emperor? When the question was asked in old-time Japan, it was promptly answered by saying, "We repay in this form one ten-thousandth part of the benefit we and our ancestors have received from the king and the state." It was essentially a feudal idea, according to which the feudal subjects render dues to their suzerain for the fiefs they hold. The sense of duty and obligation was felt most keenly by those who, like the Samurai, were in immediate relation with the sovereign, but not to an equal degree by other classes of people. We need a satisfactory philosophical ground for our patriotism, so that our service to the country may not end in a larger kind of selfish ambition. What relation do the glory and good of

Japan hold to the glory and good of other nations and peoples? Shall our attitude towards other peoples be that of self-assertive, self-glorying ambition, or one of righteous purpose and fraternal good-will? There is probably but one answer to these questions: that is, that the history of the human race is one vast, organic, ethical process; that it is an evolutionary process towards an ethical end, so that all times, all peoples, all men, are to contribute towards the realization of those states and conditions which are the ultimate goal of all history, and the fulfilment of the visions and prophecies of the best men of all the ages. One nation is but a member of the whole fraternity of nations, so that it and they are all working, with different missions and sometimes in temporary conflicts of interest and purposes, yet overruled by Providence, towards the accomplishment of one great historical process. No progressive social order can long endure without resting on some such self-consistent ethical conception of human existence. As the sunlight of an early spring morn scatters the fog which has covered the hills, valleys, and villages like one vast sheet over sleeping figures, so must these great truths of God and man shine upon the peoples of the Far East, and scatter those systems of philosophy which make arts, civilization, and the wisdom of man altogether vanity and vexation of spirit. This is the problem, nay, the conflict, which is now calling forth the most earnest efforts of the best people of Japan.

These new ideas, it will be noticed, are the essential elements in the ethical conceptions of the modern democratic Christian West. They are already present in Japan, together with other ideas of Western civilization, and will make themselves felt yet more and more powerfully till they permeate through the length and breadth of the whole social structure of modern Japan. It took old Japan one thousand years to take in and assimilate the old ideas from China and India and develop her own distinct ideal and conception of life. It is but reasonable to suppose that it will take new Japan at least a century to take in and assimilate the new ideas from Europe and America and develop her own and a more complete and

perfect philosophy of life. And when she succeeds in this attempt, then will she have attained that ideal of national greatness and glory about which the present generation of her people are but dreaming, for the realization of which they will be all willing to die. The good angel of destiny seems to be standing with a smile upon her face and pointing to the road the New Japan is to take.

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THE SOCIAL QUESTION IN THE CATHOLIC CONGRESSES.

THE reports of the Congresses upon social questions in the Roman Catholic Church, together with the literature which these gatherings directly inspire, already furnish illustrations of inestimable value as to the part that organized religion is likely to play among the industrial and economic forces. It is the purpose of this article not to describe the various local, national, and international Congresses upon the social question, but rather to show the content and development of thought and discussion upon economic and industrial issues which the Church is raising. As early as 1862, Dr. Döllinger advised the Church to take social questions into more definite consideration. A further step was taken in 1869 by Bishop von Ketteler in recommending the clergy to study political economy as a part of their training for priestly duties. This counsel received the sanction of the assembled Bishops at their conference in that year. After the war of 1870-71, several teachers introduced economic and social science studies into their seminary courses. Though these subjects had been touched at two previous Congresses, it is after this date that the real interest begins. It is not confined to one country, but shows itself in Austria, Germany, France, and Belgium. Two young officers returned to France from German prisons * resolved to rouse the religious leaders

* The Count de Mun and his friend, La Tour du Pin Chambly.